

# **TWENTY KLICKS UP THIRTEEN**

**AN ANNOTATED PHOTO JOURNAL OF MY 21 MONTHS  
WITH THE OV-1 MOHAWKS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY'S  
FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION  
IN VIETNAM**

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**THOMAS M. BARNES**



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This document is dedicated to my Dad,

Walter Earl Barnes

who devotedly stored all of the slides, letters, and  
other items that I sent home from Vietnam

and to my Mom,

Corinne Schultz Barnes

who sent me all the cookies and letters of encouragement  
to quit smoking while I was in the service

July 2008

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I was able to find the names of men that I did not recall from people whom I contacted on the Internet. I had not had contact with most of these men for nearly 35 years. They are: Ron Adolph, Mike Scully, Primo Funari and Richard Amerault. A special thanks to Phung Do, a 25-year-old Vietnamese woman I first met in 2000 who critiqued this document as I was creating it. She corrected some of the descriptions that I originally had of the photos of Vietnamese culture and of the phonetic pronunciations of the towns, villages and locations in Vietnam. Unlike English, the Vietnamese written language contains typographical marks over and on some of the letters as visual cues for pronunciation. For example, to pronounce the letter "D" in Vietnamese, the letter is written as "Đ", with a horizontal line through the vertical portion of the letter. Without the horizontal line, the pronunciation is the same as that for the English letter "Z". However, the word processor that I used to create this document did not have all the capability to add the accent marks that I wanted. That's unfortunate, too, because some of the words are quite unique. For example, Phung Do pointed out that I had not properly spelled nor conveyed the proper phonetic pronunciation of the town of Phu Cuong. I was not able to give the proper spelling because the letters "u" and "o" in the second word have unique typographical marks. (See the map on page 29). Note the unique presentation of the letters "u" and "o" in "Cuong" and that the accent mark over the "u" in "Phu" is at a different angle than the one over the "o" in "Cuong." Each of these represent different pronunciations of the vowels. The pronunciation, as best as I can write it, is "FOO COONG".

Phung Do was a barber in the city in Ohio where I lived at the time. In the Fall of 2001 I gave her a copy of the photo journal as I had developed it to that point. Early the following year, Phung Do traveled back to Vietnam to spend time with her family. Upon returning, she gave me a wonderful present of a scene of a Vietnam landscape painted by a Vietnamese artist. She later left the barber shop where she worked without leaving word as to where she was bound.

Less than a year after sending a copy of the photo journal to Richard Amerault, a former ASTA platoon sergeant, he died from the prostate cancer that he thought he had conquered five years earlier. That news hit me hard because, at that time, I was approaching the end of my five-year period of being cancer-free from the same disease.

## PREFACE

This manuscript is a derivative of one that I developed to accompany color slides that I took while assigned to an aviation unit of the U. S. Army's First Infantry Division in Vietnam. In November 1996, I began development of the original document to describe about 450 slides that I had taken during my 21 months in Vietnam. That document did not contain any pictures, only the descriptions. Several years prior to the development of the text-only document, I had placed the slides in plastic containers called "slide cubes" but did not create a description of the slides at that time. In 1996, I planned to loan the slides to the First Infantry Division museum for copying and I needed a description of what was contained in the cubes. When I completed the text-only descriptions in the Summer of 1997, I gave the museum personnel a copy of the text and loaned them the slides. The decision to merge the pictures and the text into one document came several months after I made my second tour of the division's World War II European battlefields in May 2000. Following that trip, I created a photo journal of the tour from photos I had taken and from postcards and maps that I had collected. The ease of inserting scanned photos into that story gave me the encouragement to enhance my original slide text by combining the text and the digitized slides into this document. I've done this because it's easier to look at the Vietnam photos in this way than it is to read the text while projecting or viewing the slides separately. **However, the pictures inserted into this document and printed on paper do not do justice to the original slides. Even when the pictures are viewed on a computer monitor's video screen, the full detail in the pictures cannot be seen. Only when the slides are viewed directly or are projected can the pictures be fully appreciated.** I used the bold type to emphasize that, as of the creation of this document, there is no media that rivals the original slides. That's why the museum copied the slides rather than convert them to digital images.

This document was created over a period of several months using the word processor of Microsoft's Works for Windows 2000 Version 5.0 software. The hardware used was a Hewlett-Packard Pavilion Model 9680C computer, a Hewlett-Packard Pavilion Model N5495 computer, a Microtek ScanMaker 4 scanner, A Konica-Minolta Dimage Scan Dual IV scanner, a Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 970Cse printer and an Epson R300M printer. The photos are stored in the Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) format. The story is stored in the format used by the Microsoft Works for Windows word processor.

About the title. The term "klick" (a.k.a. "klik") is a slang term used to describe distance. It is derived from the term "click" that was used by artillery units during the sighting of their guns. One click on an artillery gun's elevation or azimuth knob corresponded to a change as to where the round would impact. In Vietnam, distances were given in kilometers and the troops often used the word "klick" to mean one kilometer, though one click on an artillery piece did not necessarily correspond to a change of one kilometer in the impact area. The distance from the northern edge of Saigon to our base at Phu Loi was 20 kilometers and the road that we used was Route 13. So, Phu Loi was located 20 "klicks" up the map from Saigon, or 20 "klicks" up Route 13. In previous versions of this document I spelled the word as "click", but was informed by other Vietnam veterans that the word was spelled "klick" due to its derivation from kilometer.

The graphic logo on the cover page is from a drawing that I created from a portion of a magazine cover that I saw while in Vietnam. I found the drawing shortly before finishing this document. It had never been used until now.

## **BACKGROUND**

I enlisted in the Army for 36 months on 19 April 1965 at the Fort Hayes Recruiting Center in Columbus, Ohio. During the first week of basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky I qualified for training as an operator/repairman of electronic equipment used on the Army's OV-1 aircraft, nicknamed the MOHAWK, or HAWK. In the sixth week of basic training I waived my enlistment commitment of airborne infantry, signed up for the electronics training, and was assigned to the Combat Surveillance School at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, reporting to the school's Student Company on 2 July 1965.

Following 12 weeks of basic electronics and 9 weeks of training to operate and repair the AN/APS-94 Side-Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR), I was assigned to a Signal Corps company located next to the electronics school at Fort Huachuca to aid in testing of ground-based equipment. That equipment never arrived. In February 1966, I received orders assigning me to the Army's First Infantry Division in Vietnam. I arrived at the division's headquarters base camp at Di An (pronounced ZEE ON) in the first week of April. Four days later, I joined about a half dozen other men in a 3/4 ton truck for a 40 minute ride to Phu Loi (FOO LOY), a base camp of about 5,000 men and a few women that had a runway originally built by the Japanese in World War II.

The camera I used to record some of the first days at my new assignment was a Kodak Instamatic that I brought with me from the States. Most of the men in the company had purchased new cameras after arriving in Vietnam, so I talked with some of them to determine what features each model offered. In June 1966, I bought a Yashica 35mm viewfinder still camera and a Bell & Howell 8mm movie camera. The color slides from mid-1966 were taken with the Yashica, and all movies through July 1967 were taken with the Bell & Howell.

A few months after purchasing it, the Yashica camera was stolen from my tent. For the next few months, I took only movies while deciding which 35mm camera I wanted. In January 1967 I purchased a Canon FT 35mm single lens reflex (SLR) camera with 50mm lens, which I still have, and in February of that year I purchased a 35mm wide-angle lens and a 135mm telephoto lens for the Canon. All color slides taken during the remainder of the time that I was assigned to the First Infantry Division were taken using the Canon FT camera and those three lenses. I tried to re-visit some of the areas where I had been in 1966 to take photos of what I thought I had missed before I bought the Canon SLR. In July 1967 I paid one of the men in our company \$35 for a Canon Zoom 518 Super-8mm movie camera that he said he seldom used. Most of the Super-8 movies that I have from Vietnam were taken with the Model 518. Later in 1967, I purchased an Elmo C-300 8mm movie camera that had the capability to use either Regular-8, Super-8, or Single-8 film. Some of the movies that I have were taken with the Elmo camera.

In August 1996, when I showed some of these slides to men with whom I served in Vietnam, Richard Urick, one of my former platoon commanders, told me that I have a unique collection of my time with the First Infantry Division. He stated that he did not take photos and slides with the idea of documenting his tour of duty, and that since I have so many photos of so many things, I should treasure the rare photo collection that I have. It was Richard Urick's comments that inspired me to develop the text-only description in 1996 and loan the slides to the First Infantry Division museum in 1997 for copying. I thanked Richard by sending him the first copy of this photo journal.

My time with the aviation unit of the First Infantry Division is some of the most memorable of my life. The scenes that you see in the pictures will depict an environment that, by today's standards, may appear harsh and crude. Though the equipment that we used and the aircraft in which we flew appears weathered and well used, I look at these pictures and recall that things were not as bad as they appear in the photos. I would not trade my time with the ASTA Platoon for any amount of money and I do not regret having spent the 21 months in Vietnam that I did. I think that I realized then that I had an opportunity to experience something unique and rare and I am glad that I took advantage of it and captured some of it on film.

## ABOUT THE JOURNAL AND PHOTOS

The pictures inserted in this text are primarily of the area within Vietnam designated as III Corps (Third Corps) of which Saigon was the center. These photos were taken during various flights and ground vehicle trips from Phu Loi to areas such as Tay Ninh, Saigon, Minh Thanh, Bien Hoa, and Vung Tau on the coast of the South China Sea. Some photos were taken during a visit to Can Tho, in the Mekong Delta, which was in IV Corps (Fourth Corps), and during a special leave when I returned home for 30 days in late April and early May 1967. The slide film used was 20- and 36-exposure 25 ASA Kodachrome and 64 ASA Ektachrome. (ASA was the American standard for film speed prior to United States' adoption of the international ISO standard). At first, I sent the exposed 35mm slide film and the 50-foot 8mm movie film to a Kodak processing center in Palo Alto, California using pre-paid processing paper pouches called mailers. Later, I had all my film developed by a Kodak center in Honolulu, Hawaii. Turn-around time was about 10 days for each of the two centers. Though letters from U. S. troops in Vietnam were sent for free, postage for each mailer was two first-class U. S. stamps, which we could purchase at the base post office at Phu Loi. Return postage was paid by the processing centers. Slides were returned in yellow-colored boxes made of card-stock material which looked like wooden match boxes with a tray that slid out from a protective cover. Movie film was returned wound on a small, plastic reel in a yellow-colored box made of the same card-stock material. I still have many of these boxes with some of the original slides and movies in them.

In an attempt to capture as much of the photo portion of the slides as possible, I have pushed the boundaries for the scan as close to the edges of the mount as possible. Since the slide mount opening for the transparency is a rectangle with rounded corners, some of the photos contain portions of those dark corners.

The month and year that each frame of 35mm film was placed in a cardboard mounting frame is stamped on the cardboard mount. As a cross-reference aid to the original slides, the descriptive text accompanying each photo contains those dates, but the order of the slides listed in the text is not the order in which the photos were taken. That's due to the fact that, in trying to create a sense of continuity of events, I have placed the slides in the order in which I originally visited the areas shown in the photos. Since I returned to some of the areas after purchasing the Yashica and Canon cameras, the dates on the slides in the cubes are not in chronological order. In addition to the date, the processing centers also printed the slide's number within the roll in one corner and an ID stamp following the date. The ID was usually a letter followed by a number, such as P1 or F2.

The original slides have hand-written notes on the cardboard mounts but these notes do not appear in the pictures inserted into this document. The notes were ones that I wrote prior to sending the slides home to my parents. Some notes are upside-down from the picture because I wrote the notes while looking at the slide in a viewer that inverted the image, requiring the slide to be upside-down. As I took the photos and wrote notes on the slide mounts, I was planning to eventually place the slides in an order that would show the progression of events as I lived them. That is why some slides from 1967 are mixed in with those from 1966, because photos that I took later were meant to "fill in" those times when I did not have a still camera. I have attempted to avoid too much mixing of the slides from different years because I also want to show how the structures and people changed during the 21 months I was assigned to my unit. Some mixing was deliberate to show a contrast of two widely separated periods.

The original slides inserted into this document reside in plastic cubes made for a Bell & Howell "CUBE" projector. Each cube is numbered from VN-1 through VN-13. To remove the slides from the cube, the cube is first placed on a flat surface with the solid black-colored cover on that surface. Then the black cover is slid to one side, allowing the slides to drop to the flat surface, and the remaining five-sided cube is lifted from the stack of slides. (See Appendix D). The order of the slides is from bottom to top, that is, the lowest number is at the bottom, since slides are extracted from the bottom by the projector for viewing. Not all of the slides that I have are in the cubes. I don't have an accurate count of the total number of slides that I took while in Vietnam. The number is probably between 1,000 and 1,500. The reason most of the slides have not been included here is that I selected what I considered the best ones for the 13 slide cubes. The remaining slides are either duplicates or are different angles of the same subject.



In describing each slide, I have developed the following numbering scheme, which is written in pencil on each slide. I've done this to allow this photo-document to be used as an aid if someone were to view or project the slides and in case the slides within a cube are dropped and become mixed with the slides of another cube. The numbering scheme in this document is different than that of the original text-only document that I created in 1997 because I've changed the order of some slides, replaced some, added new slides and moved some slides to other cubes.

The numbering scheme for the inserted pictures is:

SCxx-yy

where: SC = Slide Cube, the plastic cube in which the slide is stored  
xx = the number of the cube (corresponding to the number following the letters "VN" on the cube's top)  
yy = the slide's number within the cube

In the descriptive text, the above code is followed in parenthesis by the text of stamps that were printed on the mounts by the processing centers, that is, the slide number, date and ID. As an example, the first slide in the first cube is identified in the text with the code:

SC01-01 (16,JUN66P5)

to identify the corresponding slide's penciled identification as Slide Cube 1, slide number 1, followed in parenthesis with the processing center stamps: "16" (order of slide within original roll) and "JUN66P5" (the month and year the slide was developed and an ID number used by the processing center). For consistency, I tried to write the penciled coding in the upper left corner of the slide, though that was not always possible due to the hand-written notes that I wrote in ink on the mounts while in Vietnam. The processing date is not always an indication of when the photo was taken but it's a good approximation because I sent the photos to the Kodak processors as soon as I finished a roll.

While creating this photo-document, I've enlarged portions of some of the photos and have added more slides to what I assembled in 1997. An enlargement of a portion of a slide is listed with a letter "A" following the number of the slide from which the enlargement was made. For example, slide SC01-02A is an enlargement of a portion of slide SC01-02. Not all of the enlargements are on the same page as the photos from which the enlargement was made. For example, SC02-01A appears several pages after the page where SC02-01 is located.

I ordered the slides in the cubes in such a way as to show how I arrived at the division headquarters, traveled to my unit, performed my job as SLAR operator/repairman, and lived day-to-day within the compound. To do that, I've mixed pictures that I took during trips within and from my base in various vehicles. For example, a string of pictures that I've used to illustrate a trip from the division headquarters to my base will show a view out the front of a 3/4 ton truck for several photos, a view from the rear of the same type of truck and a picture or two from a 1/4 ton jeep. The pictures were taken during different trips but the reason for mixing them was to try and give a sense of continuity to the trip because I usually did not "photo document" all of my excursions.

While at Phu Loi, I was given tasks that were not part of my training as a SLAR TO, so I have tried to show what I did during those tasks as well as what I did during the time I was waiting to fly and during my time off. Once I began flying on a regular basis, I took a lot of photos from the aircraft and have tried to place the slides in a sequence that will show what it was like to make a flight from Phu Loi, fly over some of the terrain, and see some of the fantastic views that I saw from the right seat of the OV-1 MOHAWK.

The maps are of the area within III Corps (Third Corps) where the First Infantry Division was assigned while I was a member of the 1st Aviation Battalion and of some of the areas into which I traveled. The unit to which I was assigned, the time I served with that unit, and the site in Vietnam where the unit was located are as follows:

Unit: Aerial Surveillance and Target Acquisition (ASTA) Platoon (a.k.a., ASTAP)  
B Company  
1st Aviation Battalion  
First Infantry Division  
United States Army  
APO 96345

Time: 2 April 1966 - 10 January 1968

Place: Phu Loi, (South) Vietnam, located approximately 20 kilometers north of Saigon (now called Ho Chi Minh City) and 3 kilometers east of Phu Cuong (now called Thu Dau Mot), which is located on Highway 13.

## **GLOSSARY**

In the text, all measurements are given using the metric system. All time is given using the 24-hour clock, such as 0700 for 7:00AM or 2130 for 9:30PM. Dates are given in military format, that is, day, month and year, such as 24 June 1966. The following list defines the abbreviations and acronyms used in the text. The names of all Army aircraft are in capital letters, such as MOHAWK and CHINOOK. By convention, the Army usually named its aircraft after Native American nations and tribes.

1LT	First Lieutenant: the second of the company-grade officer ranks. The insignia was one silver-colored bar and the pay grade was O-2.
1SG	First Sergeant: the NCO rank of a unit's top sergeant-in-charge. The insignia of this rank was three upward-pointing chevrons with three curved stripes ("rockers") below and a diamond in the center of the space between the chevrons and rockers. The pay grade for this rank was E8.
APU	Auxiliary Power Unit: a self-contained generator used to supply power to aircraft during testing of equipment onboard the aircraft or to aid in starting the aircraft's engines.
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam: the official name of the Army of South Vietnam. This acronym was usually pronounced: ARE-vin.
ASTA	Aerial Surveillance and Target Acquisition: the name given to the platoon of men who flew, maintained, and crewed the OV-1 MOHAWKS. The acronym was pronounced the same as the dog from the THIN MAN movie and TV series.
Big Red One	The nickname of the U. S. Army's First Infantry Division. The nickname is derived from the red numeral "1" that appears on a five-sided, olive drab-colored shoulder patch.
Buck Sergeant	The NCO rank for enlisted personnel at the pay grade of E5. The insignia consists of three upward-pointing chevrons, or stripes, like three PFC stripes stacked one above the other.
Charlie	Nickname for the Viet Cong. The nickname derived from the U. S. Army phonetic alphabet for the letter "C". (See "VC", below).
CO	Commanding Officer: the head of any organization, whether it is a company, a battalion, a division, a corps, etc.
Conex	A metal storage container. Usual size was 2-1/2 meters in each dimension.
CPT	Captain: a company-grade officer's rank between First Lieutenant and Major. The insignia was two silver-colored bars and the pay grade was O-3.
CP	Command Post: the location of a unit's commander and his staff.
CQ	Charge of Quarters: the person or persons placed in charge of an organization during off duty hours.
Danger Forward	The name given to the First Infantry Division's CP. This is where the division's commanding general and his staff have their headquarters as the division moves in the field.
DEROS	Date of Expected Rotation from Over Seas: the date personnel on overseas assignments expected to leave the foreign country and return to the States.
Di An	The name given to one of the locations of the headquarters of the First Infantry Division in Vietnam. As most base camps in Vietnam, Di An was named for the town located nearby. The name is pronounced ZEE-on, since in Vietnamese the letter "D" is pronounced as a "Z" unless the left, vertical leg of the "D" has a small horizontal line through it (Đ). With the horizontal line, the "D" is pronounced as a "D".

DMZ	Demilitarized Zone: an area separating North and South Vietnam that was supposed to be free of military weapons and personnel from both combative forces.
E5	Enlisted Pay Grade 5: one of nine pay grades in the Army during the Vietnam era. This pay grade was assigned to men and women of SP5 and Buck Sergeant rank.
EM	Enlisted Men: usually refers to all U. S. Army personnel below the rank of sergeant.
FAC	Forward Air Controller: the name given to personnel in an aircraft who were responsible for spotting targets on the ground and coordinating air strikes on those targets.
GCA	Ground Controlled Approach: radar-based system that allows an airfield's ground-based control personnel to direct an aircraft on a flight path and glide slope to the end of the runway. The system was used during inclement weather or any time the pilot was unable to see the approach lights and/or runway edge-marker lights. Jokingly referred to as "Gonna Crash Anyway."
IR	Infra Red: the sensor equipment carried by the OV-1 Model C (a.k.a., OV-1C). The IR sensor received signals through a panel in the belly of the aircraft, but did not transmit a signal. Instead, liquid nitrogen-cooled "sensors" were used to detect differences in heated objects and their surroundings. While in Vietnam, IR was also referred to as Red Haze in order to, for some obscure reason, disguise the fact that the OV-1C had an infra red sensor.
MAJ	Major: an officer rank above Captain. The insignia was a gold-colored oak leaf and the pay grade was O-4.
MG	Major General: the second of four general ranks in the military, usually given to division commanders. The insignia was two silver-colored stars and the pay grade was O-8.
MI	Military Intelligence: the unit responsible for assigning photo, SLAR, and IR missions and assessing the imagery from those missions and reporting to the unit commander of their findings.
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officers: refers to all U. S. Army non-officer personnel at and above the pay grade of E5.
OD	Olive Drab: the color of most everything in the U. S. Army.
PFC	The rank for enlisted personnel at the pay grade of E3. The insignia was one upward-pointing chevron.
Phu Loi	The name given to one of the base camps of the First Infantry Division. This camp was named for either the nearby village or the ARVN base camp located nearby. Pronounced FOO-Loy.
POL	Petroleum-Oil-Lubrication: the location on an Army compound where gasoline and other petroleum products were stored and distributed. Essentially, this was the military version of a filling station.
PSP	Perforated Steel Plank: a steel panel that was manufactured of heavy gage steel that had been corrugated for rigidity and with holes (perforations) to allow passage of water and mud. The ends and edges of each panel were made to allow it to interlock with other panels. The name was never pronounced as a word, but simply as the three letters: PSP
PX	Post Exchange: the on-base retail store on an Army compound.
Repo Depot	Replacement Depot: the place where personnel arriving in an organization were sent prior to their final assignments within the organization. An older pronunciation is "repel depel."

SFC	Sergeant First Class: the NCO rank for enlisted personnel at the pay grade of E7. The insignia consisted of three upward-pointing chevrons, the same as for a Buck Sergeant, and two curved stripes (or "rockers") below the chevrons. The rank was also referred to as "three up and two down."
SLAR	Side-Looking Airborne Radar: the radar carried by the OV-1 Model B (a.k.a., OV-1B) which transmitted from an antenna fixed to the right underbelly of the aircraft. The radar signals were directed perpendicular to the line of flight, that is, to either side of the aircraft. The result was an image of the ground on both sides of the aircraft that was exposed on photographic-like film.
SP4	Specialist 4th Class: the technical rank for enlisted personnel that had the pay grade of E4, the same as a corporal.
SP5	Specialist 5th Class: the enlisted technical rank above SP4, with the pay grade of E5, the same as a buck sergeant.
SP6	Specialist 6th Class: the enlisted technical rank above SP5, with the pay grade of E6, the same as a staff sergeant.
SSG	Staff Sergeant: the NCO rank for enlisted personnel at the pay grade of E6. The insignia consisted of three upward-pointing chevrons, the same as for a Buck Sergeant, and one curved stripe (or "rocker") below the chevrons.
TDY	Temporary Duty: a temporary assignment to another unit or location.
TO	Technical Observer: the name of the enlisted men and NCOs who operated and maintained the SLAR and IR sensor equipment of the OV-1 MOHAWK aircraft.
TO&E	Table of Operation and Equipment: the official document defining the "makeup" of an Army unit. The document defines the equipment, personnel, and ranks of the personnel in the unit.
USP	Unperforated Steel Plank: a steel panel that was manufactured of heavy gage steel that had been corrugated for rigidity. It is the same as PSP, only there are no holes punched into the plank.
USO	United Services Organization: the private, independent agency through which Americans provide welfare and recreation to the armed forces.
VC	Viet Cong: the Communist-oriented guerrilla adversaries fighting against the ARVN and U.S. troops in what was then South Vietnam. The letters were sometimes pronounced VIC, though that was usually short for VICTOR, which is the U. S. Army phonetic for the letter "V". The Army phonetic pronunciation for "VC" is VICTOR CHARLIE. (See "Charlie", above).
XO	Executive Officer: the officer of any organization responsible for insuring the orders of the commanding officer are carried out and executed as the commanding officer intended.

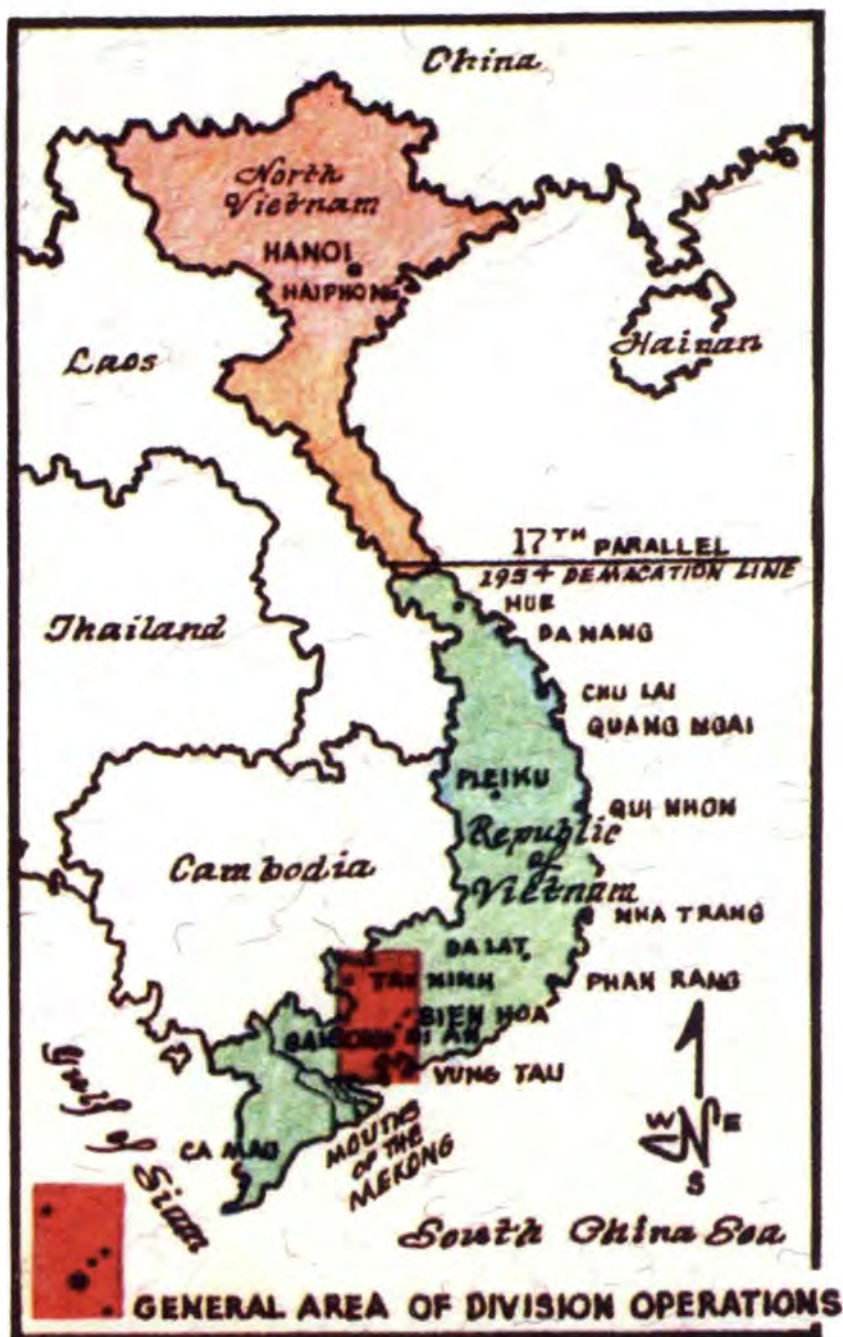
## INTRODUCTION TO THE AREA

The map at the right was copied from the inside cover of a book titled FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION IN VIETNAM - Volume 1. It was published in 1967 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the First Infantry Division and covered the period July 1965 to April 1967. I purchased the book while I was in Vietnam and shipped it home.

As noted by the text at the bottom of the map, the red-colored area at the southern end of the country was the general area of division operations.

Some of the division landed at the coastal town of Vung Tau in July 1965 and moved to an area east of Saigon. The OV-1 MOHAWK aircraft were sent by surface ship to The Philippines and then flew from there to the base at Phu Loi, north of Saigon, arriving in October 1965.

I was assigned to the division in February 1966 and flew to Saigon in April 1966, landing at Tan Son Nhut (tawn sun NUT) airport at the northern edge of the city. I arrived at 2300 hours, stepped off the air-conditioned airliner and into a "wall" of heat. After voicing my opinion of the heat and humidity, I was told that the temperature had "cooled down" to 33C (92F) from the day's high.



Map from THE FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION IN VIETNAM - 1967



Map from THE FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION IN VIETNAM - 1967



The map at the left is from the same book as the map on page 13 and shows the portion of the U. S. Army's Third Corps referred to as War Zone C. From the latter half of 1965 to June 1970, the U. S. Army's First Infantry Division was assigned to the areas north and northeast of the capital city of Saigon, in Tay Ninh (tay NIN) and Song Be (song BAY) Provinces. The red-colored "splats" are locations of battles. In the map below, the area referred to as the "Parrot's Beak" is the green-colored Cambodian border west of Saigon. The "Dog Ears" portion of the border is just to the west of the town of Binh Long on Highway 13. Binh Long is just above the word "Song" in Song Be.

The SLAR, IR and photo missions flown by the division's MOHAWKS were in this area. Typically, the SLAR missions were flown at night, on autopilot, at 2,900 meters (9,500 feet) and parallel to the border with Cambodia in an attempt to catch the VC moving into Vietnam. Other missions were flown parallel with Highway 13 from Saigon to the Cambodian border or perpendicular to Highway 13 from Bien Hoa to the Parrot's Beak. The missions would last for 3 to 4 hours, repeatedly passing over the same area, first in one direction then 180 degrees in the opposite direction. Each pass traced the previous and lasted from 30 to 40 minutes. Quite boring as long as the aircraft was not in the path of high altitude artillery or unknown jet aircraft, referred to as "high speed strangers" by Paris Control, the air traffic control center in Saigon. The TO's job was to call the division's artillery center, DivArty, and give the coordinates of any moving "targets" that appeared on film displayed in front of the TO. DivArty determined whether any targets were worthy of being fired on by the division's artillery units. IR missions were

flown at an altitude of 760 meters (2,500 feet), each pass offset from the previous in order to cover a pre-determined area, a technique called "mowing the lawn". The film exposed by the IR sensors was not displayed for viewing by the TO, so the IR TO did not "call in" any targets. The IR film was evaluated later by the attached MI organization. IR missions could be just as boring as those for the SLAR. In fact, they were so boring for the pilot and the TO that there were cases where both fell asleep while the aircraft was on autopilot. On more than one mission, the pilot would not wake up until the aircraft was in Cambodia. Quite often, the aircraft carrying the IR sensors would land while the Master Caution light warned of low fuel. I know that because I made a couple of IR flights even though I was trained as a SLAR TO. I made the IR flights because I wanted the experience of flying an IR mission. Nearly all photo missions were flown during the day time from various altitudes, depending on the mission requirements. Most were below 760 meters. Our unit made a few night photos missions using flares launched from pods on top of the wings. The concept of taking night photos and letting the VC know where the aircraft was flying by "popping" flares did not appeal to me. I was on two of those night missions.

At the right is a 2000 version of the map where the First Infantry Division was assigned when I arrived in April 1966. The division's headquarters were located near the town of Di An, northeast of Saigon. The 1st Aviation Battalion, the unit to which I was assigned, was located near a small village called Phu Loi, east of Phu Cuong, now called Thu Dau Mot. On this map, Phu Loi would be about where the gap appears between the words "Phu Cuong".



From MICHELIN MAP OF VIETNAM



From U.S. ARMY MAP OF VIETNAM



At left is a portion of an Army map to which I had added notes prior to sending the map home.

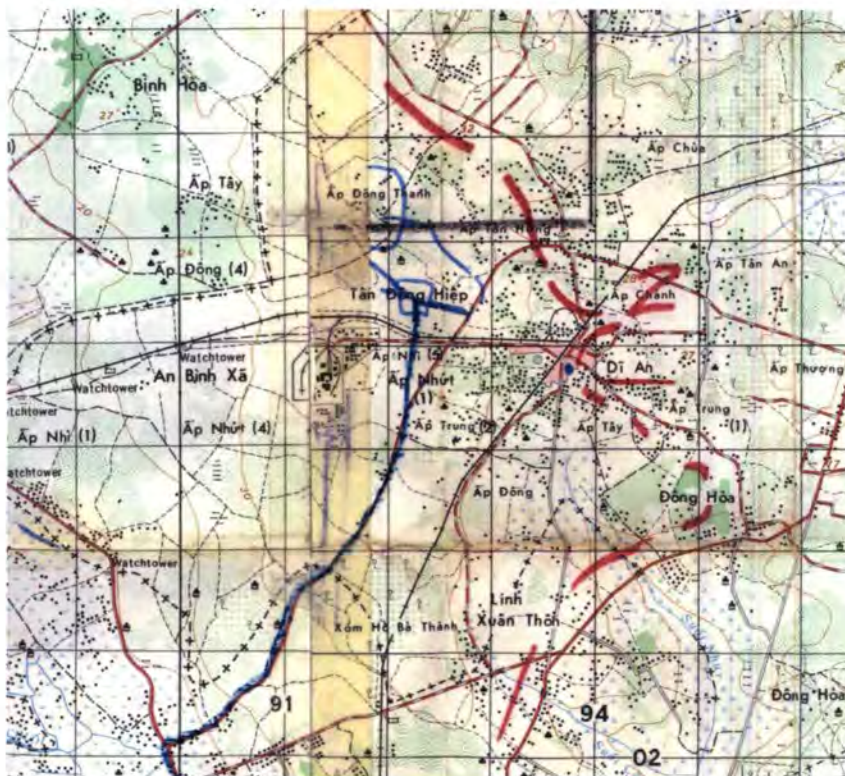
The circled area with the red number "1" is Tan Son Nhut airport where I landed in 1966. The blue-colored Camp 'Alpha' was the Army's initial repo depot at the time, located on the airport compound. Later, the depot was moved to Long Binh (long BIN) east of Saigon, a larger area for handling the increase in the number of people being transported into and out of the war zone. The blue-colored line leading from Camp Alpha to the right is the route that I assumed that the bus took to get from the camp to my division's headquarters at Di An. I arrived at Camp Alpha around 0130 hours, got to bed at 0300 and was roused at 0500 for breakfast chow. While leaving the chow hall I saw a buck sergeant on KP (kitchen police). I wondered what the Army had in store for a lowly PFC like me while I was at the repo depot. At the daily 0800 assembly I found out. Mine was the eighth name read

off to leave on the 0900 bus for transport to the First Infantry Division! I never thought the Army could be that efficient, to get my name on the list after I had been at the depot less than eight hours.

From U.S. ARMY MAP OF VIETNAM

This is a more detailed map of the area around Di An than is shown in the maps on page 14. The blue line leading from the bottom of the map to the area west of Di An is the route the bus probably took from Camp Alpha to the division headquarters located in the blue square. The red-colored road in the lower left corner is Route 13. I cannot be certain of the exact route the bus took since I was not familiar with the area at the time. However, I learned there are few other routes from Saigon to Di An.

I wrote the red number "2" on the map to indicate that was the second stop that I made in Vietnam on my way to my final destination at Phu Loi. I did that as a way of allowing my parents to follow my progress. I learned later that my Dad studied the entire map for over an hour after he received it because he had not seen an Army map with these types of features.





## ARRIVAL AND SETTLING IN

This is the entrance to the tented area of the division's repo depot where personnel arrived at the division to replace troops who were returning to the States ... or were killed. This was where I "entered" the organizational ranks of the Big Red One after leaving Camp Alpha at Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon. This repo depot was located at the First Infantry Division's headquarters base camp in Di An. When I arrived at Di An, I had been "in country" for less than 12 hours, having landed at Tan Son Nhut at 2300 the previous night. Counting the day I arrived and the day I left, I was at the division's repo depot for 4 days.

SC01-01 (16,JUN66P5)



SC01-02 (34,JUN66P5)

By the time I returned to the repo depot in June 1966, the tents in which I had stayed for three days in April were being replaced by wooden structures with concrete floors, shown in the background. The tent at the left in the picture was part of a line of tents shown in SC01-01.



An enlargement from SC01-02 shows discarded shipping containers being added to the top of the new repo depot shower for storage of water for the shower. I think one of the building's beyond the shower is the new repo depot mess hall.

SC01-02A





SC01-03 (11,JUN66P5)



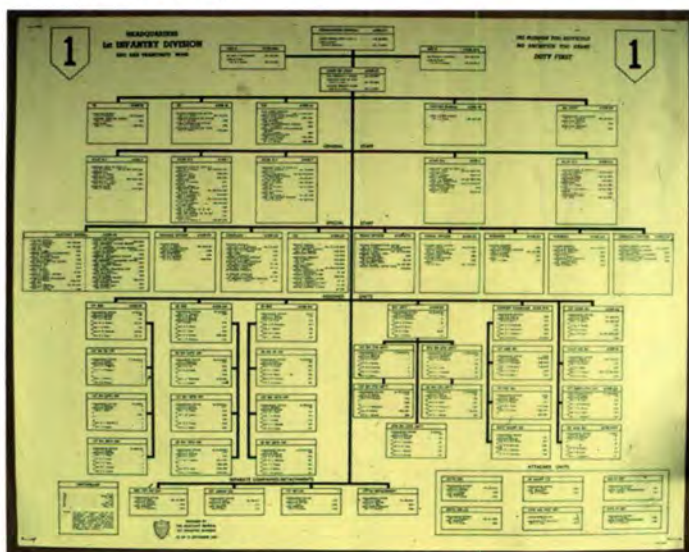
The division headquarters building, flags, and sign at Di An as they existed in June 1966. Most likely these were there when I arrived in April, but I did not see them nor pass by them in April.

SC01-04 (29,AUG67P8)



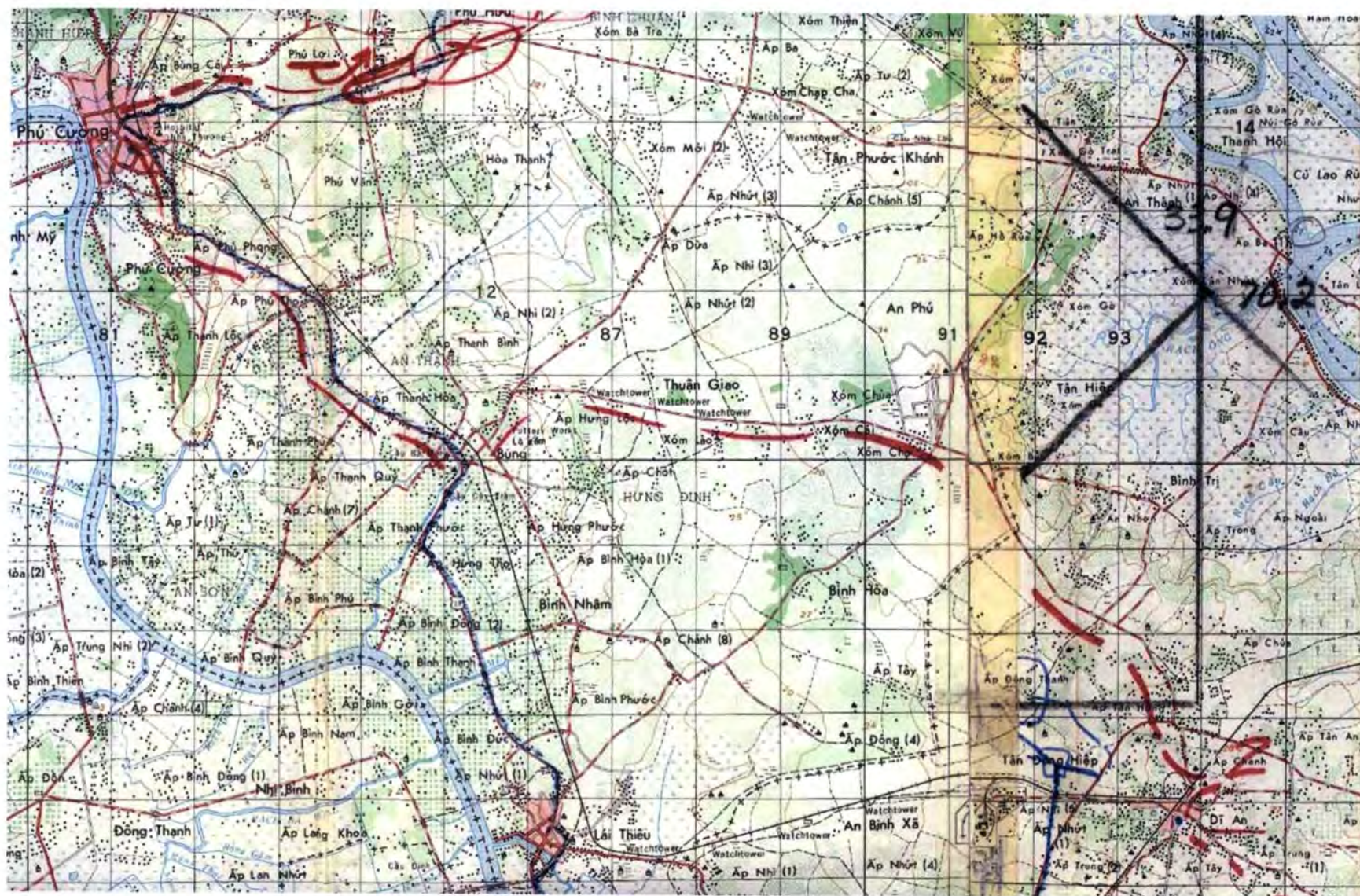
This is a shot of the center section of a magazine article about the First Infantry Division that I found shortly after the division celebrated its 50th anniversary in June 1967. I think the magazine was published by the division and that I saw it while serving as CQ. The text on either side of the division's Big Red One shoulder patch describe two stories about the possible origin of the patch's design. The patches of each of the units assigned and attached to the division during my tour are shown at the border. The patch of the 1st Aviation Battalion to which I was assigned is located second from the top on the right border.

SC01-05 (4,DEC67P3)



This organizational chart for the division caught my attention when I pulled CQ duty in December 1967. It was mounted on the wall in the B Company commander's office. Though this slide and SC01-04 were taken near the end of my tour, I've placed them in the first cube in order to introduce the reader to the division's unit names and patches. Though it's difficult to read at the scale of this inserted photo, the text in the chart and in the magazine article of SC01-04 can be read when the slide is projected on a wall. That's how good the detail is in the slides.





From U.S. ARMY MAP

This is the route from Di An to Phu Loi via Highway 13. The portion of the route marked in blue from Di An to Highway 13 is not shown. I "requisitioned" this map from some element of our unit but I don't know the purpose of the black marker lines. The red and blue lines are ones that I added prior to sending the map home.



SC01-06 (21,JUN66P5)



This is a view out the front window of a 3/4 ton truck traveling on the red dirt-covered road from Di An to Highway 13. The truck is the same type in which I first rode to my assigned base camp, Phu Loi. In June 1966 we were traveling on some of the roads I took in April 1966 when I left the repo depot at Di An on my way to Phu Loi. The position in the truck's front seat in which I was sitting when I took this picture was the same position that I rode in when I traveled from Di An to Phu Loi in April. The red dirt is a substance called

laterite, which had the consistency and abrasiveness of scouring powder. The soldiers in front of the truck are ARVN troops. Most likely they are recruits on a training march because they had no weapons. The boots the troops were wearing had green canvas sides with rubber soles, similar to high-top basketball shoes. The blurred objects in the right foreground are the right post of the truck's windshield and an M-14 rifle (to the right of the post). The house, or "hooch", in the background is that of a farmer, whose fields were located to the right of the house. The truck is actually heading into the town of Di An, but I put this photo and the next here to try to convey what I saw during my initial trip from Di An to Phu Loi because this road was one of those on which I first traveled to Phu Loi.

SC01-07 (20,JUN66P5)



This was a spot further along the laterite road to the town of Di An. The large, oncoming vehicle is a 2-1/2 ton truck, commonly referred to as a "deuce and a half", and has a six-cylinder diesel engine with a four-speed manual transmission. The utility "pole" near the house is a concrete casting, and the holes in the "pole" were deliberately made part of the casting to reduce the "pole's" total weight.



SC01-08 (2,JUN1966P5)



A "bar-and-brothel" located between the division's Di An base camp and the town of Di An. These structures were numerous and common near the American base camps. They all had such laughable names as this one: BAR MIAMI BEACH. Others were called HOLLYWOOD BAR, SHERWOOD FOREST, and FAIR LADY, and were intended to show these were bars for Americans because they had names in English.

SC01-09 (29,JUN66P5)



This paved-surface road is Highway 13, heading north toward Phu Cuong. The "vehicle" ahead of the truck is an ox-cart. The tube-like object at the top of the photo is the disconnected vacuum line for the windshield wiper on the passenger's side.

SC01-10 (31,JUN66P5)



Continuing north on Highway 13, we encountered a horse-cart. Further ahead on the road is another 3/4 ton truck. The vertical bar in the left foreground is a piece of angle-iron welded to the front of the truck to cut any wires that the Viet Cong might have strung across the road at neck height. The top 10cm is angled forward in order to force the wire into a sharpened "V" cut into the leading edge of the bar to cut the wire.



SC01-11 (36,DEC67P6)

This is a school on the eastern edge of Highway 13, located about 5 kilometers north of where the road from Di An intersected Highway 13.



SC01-12 (31,DEC67P6)



The Vietnamese girls immediately in front of the truck are carrying what appear to be school bags, so I assume they were headed to or from school at the time I took their picture.

SC01-13 (32,DEC67P6)

The hand-written note on the slide mount of this photo states: "Foot-bridge to village off HW13". However, the bridge appears strong enough to hold animal-driven carts and possibly a light vehicle such as a motor scooter. The bridge crosses a large ditch next to Highway 13 and is perpendicular to the highway. The sand-bagged structured at the far, right-hand side of the bridge is a guard bunker that "protects" the entrance to the village beyond. I placed "protects" in quotes because all permanent structures could be destroyed by the Viet Cong during a mortar attack, and the corrugated-tin roof of this bunker could only be used to keep the sun and rain off its occupants. The writing on the stone marker on the pedestal in the lower right corner is "Cau Sat Binh Nham", probably the name of the village.





SC01-14 (28,DEC67P6)



Water in the large ditch next to Highway 13 occasionally crested the edge of the road and deposited silt on the road, such as the tan-colored dirt shown here. In the middle of the photo, just below the two white columns, a plank foot-bridge crosses the ditch. This is a true foot-bridge, not like the one shown in SC01-13, and is only supported by half a dozen small posts mounted in the middle of the ditch. The bridge leads to a wood and thatch house just beyond the trees at the right.

SC01-15 (26,DEC67P6)



Further up Highway 13 from the photo in SC01-14 is another farmer's house that is closer to the edge of the highway than the house in SC01-14, though only a portion of the white roof can be seen as an angled slash in the center of the photo. The utility pole is a variation of the concrete castings used by the Vietnamese. Look closely and you can see that there are two people riding the 50cc motorscooter just ahead of the truck.

SC01-16 (33,DEC67P6)



This is a typical rural Vietnamese house, located about 40 meters from the edge of Highway 13 as the highway heads north to Phu Cuong. The man in the black-colored shorts is using a small broom to sweep around the border of the thatch house. I'm not sure whether the water-filled canal leading from the pond in the foreground is an irrigation ditch or a flooded foot path. There is another canal to the right that parallels the one in the center, so these may be irrigation devices, but I have no idea what is growing on the raised ground between the ditches.



SC01-17 (27,DEC67P6)



More homes along Highway 13. The car in the background, that's to the right of the truck in the background, is a 1950s vintage car, possibly a Plymouth. This photo was taken from the rear of a 3/4 ton truck so that's why the hood and the windshield are not visible.

SC01-18 (29,DEC67P6)

This object was constructed at the edge of the road along Highway 13, about 2 kilometers south of Phu Cuong.

I had originally written that this was a Buddhist prayer stand. In 2001, Phung Do pointed out that this is a memorial, probably for someone killed along the highway.



SC01-19 (22, DEC67P6)



The bridges along Highway 13 were not wide enough to accommodate vehicles larger than ox-carts traveling in opposite directions, so opposing traffic had to alternate crossing the bridges, as shown in this photo.



SC01-20 (21,DEC67P6)

This is a closer view of the bridge shown in SC01-19. The bridge is supported by two, curved, concrete buttress-like structures. If our truck had attempted to cross the bridge while the ox-carts were heading across, we might have injured one of the animals, since the bridge is so narrow. That would have seriously affected the farmer's ability to make a living, since these animals were both tractor and car for these people. However, some GIs didn't seem to care about what damage they might do, and caused a lot of grief when they hit the animals or the carts, or both. Note the one-man guard bunker at the left, just off the road. This one could have been destroyed with a Viet Cong hand grenade. The yellow flag with the three red stripes that is flying from the pole to the right is the South Vietnamese national flag.



SC01-21 (15,AUG67P5)



Another bridge-guarding bunker along Highway 13. The green fields in the background are rice paddies. The dark objects in the foreground are the windshield, canvas top and top support of a 1/4 ton jeep.

SC01-22 (35,DEC67P6)



This rural home has its own grave yard. The brown-colored structures to the right are grave markers.



SC01-23 (25,DEC67P6)



Just south of Phu Cuong, Highway 13 runs right next to the *Song Saigon* (Saigon River), which, in this photo, is at high tide. The land at this point is so close to sea level that the river rises and falls with the tide. I saw boats in this portion of the river sitting on the muddy bottom at 0800 in the morning and then float in a filled river at noon.

SC01-24 (20,DEC67P6)

This is a photo that Ed Castillo, one of the other members of my platoon in 1967, took of me as we both rode in the back of a 3/4 ton truck. This is a set-up shot, as I had given Ed my camera and asked that he take the photo.



SC01-25 (23,DEC79P6)



The Saigon River flows next to Highway 13 for a few kilometers north and south of the town of Phu Cuong. Near the town of Lai Thieu (lie TWO), the river is so close it could almost be considered one of the road's ditches. The boats pictured here are usually homes for an entire family, which use the boats to haul produce and livestock from farms into Phu Cuong. The truck on the road is an ARVN 2-1/2 ton truck.



SC01-26 (34,DEC67P6)

A close view of one of the Vietnamese house-boats on the Saigon River next to Highway 13 near the town of Lai Thieu.



SC01-27 (36,OCT67P5)



The time is about 0830 and the Vietnamese house-boats are just beginning to make their way up-river toward Phu Cuong. Up- river in this photo is to the right-rear.

SC01-28 (37,OCT67P5)

The houseboat nearest the bicycle is either loading or unloading something from the ox-cart at the extreme left. There is a narrow, wooden plank leading from the boat to the river bank near the ox-cart.





SC01-29 (37,DEC67P6)



A Buddhist prayer kiosk at the side of the road along Highway 13. The photo is a bit blurred because I took the picture when I was a passenger in a truck doing about 55 kilometers/hour (k/h).

Phung Do informed me that these are usually at the front of someone's home. That's probably where this was located because the boards to the left of the photo lead across a water-filled ditch and probably lead to the entrance of a house.

SC01-30 (38,OCT67P5)



Buddhist pagoda east of Highway 13, near the town of Bung.

SC01-31 (19,OCT67P5)



The entrance to one of the ARVN basic training centers located on Highway 13 just south of Phu Cuong.



SC01-32 (18,OCT67P5)



An ARVN MP (military police) is standing at the right side of the road near a checkpoint on Highway 13 and about one kilometer from the entrance to the ARVN basic training center. The bypass on the left is used to allow on-coming traffic to go around vehicles that are stopped on the road heading toward the viewer.

SC01-33 (17,DEC 67P6)



This is Highway 13 about two kilometers south of Phu Cuong.

SC01-34 (16,DEC67P6)



The pink-colored building at the left is an elementary school.

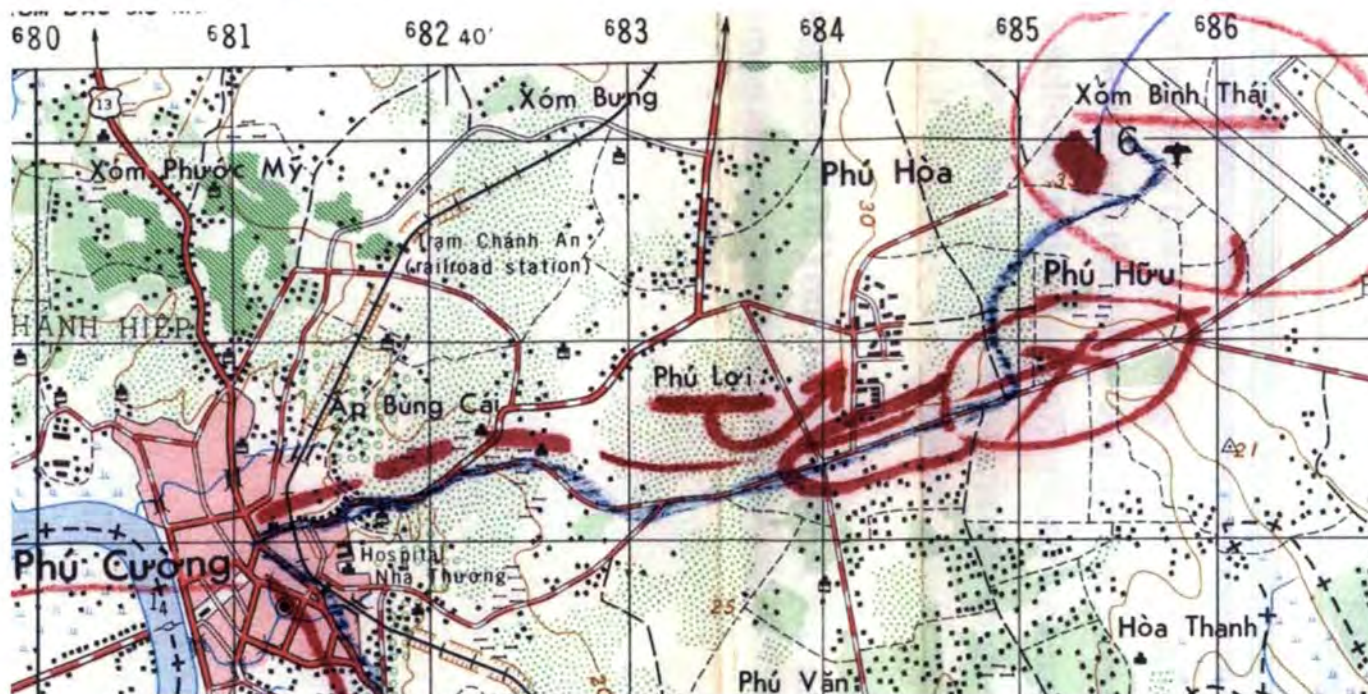


SC01-35 (15,DEC67P6)



This photo was taken about 500 meters south of the traffic circle at Phu Cuong. The white-colored building at the left is typical of the modern structures erected during the 1960s. It was constructed of wooden columns and bricks and was covered with stucco. This building has 7 or 8 bays for vehicles on the ground floor and apartments on the second and third floors.

From U.S. ARMY MAP OF VIETNAM



During the ride to Phu Loi, we approached Phu Cuong from the south, following the blue-colored line. The line changes direction at a traffic circle and heads east passed a hospital on the edge of town. Continuing on the road highlighted by the blue marker, the truck headed into the Phu Loi compound about where the blue line leaves the road. The red-colored blob under the large black "16" is the approximate area of the unit to which I was assigned, B Company of the 1st Aviation Battalion. The name "Phu Loi" is underlined and a red arrow points to what I thought was the town of Phu Loi, though I was never in that section because it was off limits to U. S. troops.

The runway depicted in the upper right corner of the map was initially built by the Japanese during World War II from a nearby source of laterite. I recall seeing the pit from which the laterite was mined and I think it was to the southeast of the compound, off the map to the right.



SC01-36 (14, DEC67P6)



This is the south entrance to the Phu Cuong traffic circle. This photo and the ones described in SC01-31 through SC01-35 were taken in the reverse order listed in this text, as can be noted by the numbering sequence 19 through 14. They were taken from the back of a 3/4 ton truck that was part of a convoy heading south on Highway 13, but were presented in this order to convey the story of heading to Phu Loi for the first time from the First Infantry Division's headquarters at Di An. Other vehicles in the convoy are: a 3/4 ton truck (with the white star in the middle of the front bumper), an ambulance (just behind the 3/4 ton truck, and a 2-1/2 ton truck (just beyond the Vietnamese woman with the cone-shaped hat). The 3/4 ton truck at the

extreme left, with the yellow lettering on the front of the hood, is an ARVN vehicle stopped at the edge of the traffic circle. The 2-1/2 ton truck just beyond the Vietnamese woman is coming from the direction of Phu Loi on a road that intersects with Highway 13 from the east. The view in this photo is to the north.

SC01-37 (27, JUN66P5)



This is a farmer's ox-cart traveling on the Phu Loi road just east of Phu Cuong. The boy driving the ox-cart is probably 12 to 14 years old.

SC01-38 (1, MAR67P5)



This is Phu Loi "Strip", located about one kilometer west of the main entrance to the U. S. Army base at Phu Loi. This strip is nothing more than bars and shops with cheap gifts. Each bar has a brothel with at least six rooms in the back.



SC02-01 (37, OCT67P2)



These are some of the first living quarters that I saw when I entered the Phu Loi compound. They are near the main entrance and still being used when I took this photo near the end of my assignment to the division. We had been living in our concrete-floored barracks for a year and this unit was still in tents. I took the photo because I saw a different style to these tents than the ones that we had. These are constructed differently than the ones in SC02-04 (below) and they each have a unique character.

SC02-02 (17, JUN66Z4)



At the left is the front of the headquarters for the 1st Aviation Battalion at Phu Loi as it looked about two months after I arrived. I painted the letters and the blue and red emblem of the battalion sign shortly after I arrived at Phu Loi. The division emblems in the upper left and upper right corners and the U. S. ARMY in the arched board were added by someone else after I finished.

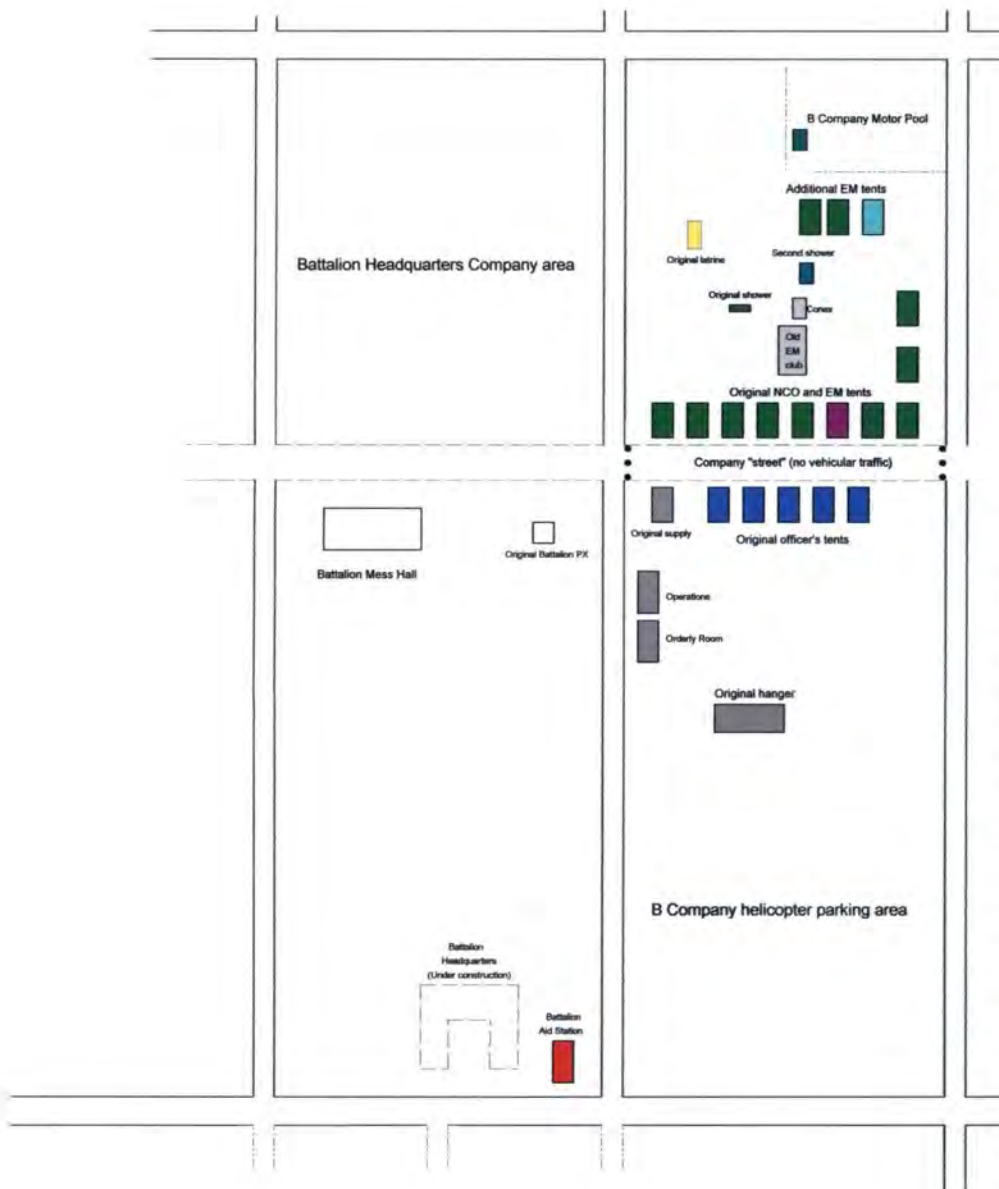
SC02-03 (25, JUN66P5)



This view is looking southeast along B Company's street. The first two tents from the left are those for company officers, and the third tent is for the company supply. The man in the photo is Major Carter, the B Company CO when I arrived in April 1966.

In the background is the battalion mess hall in the next "block". (See diagram on the next page).





The green, blue, purple and gray rectangles represent the approximate layout of the tents in the B Company bivouac when I arrived in April 1966. There were tents in the battalion HQ area but they do not appear here.

The purple rectangle is the location of the tent where I spent the first week or two. Later, I moved to the tent represented by the light blue rectangle.

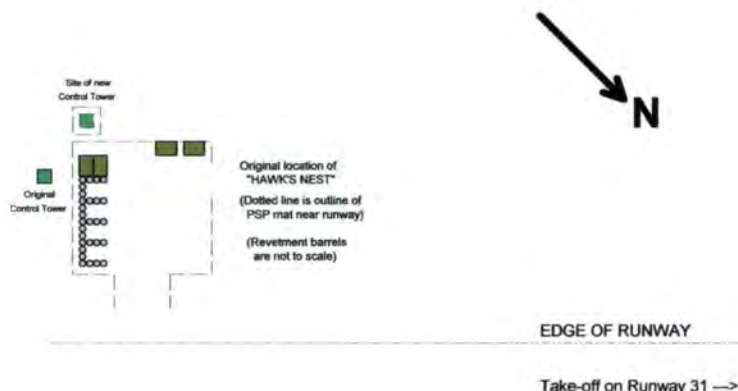
At the bottom is the approximate location of the "Hawk's Nest" where the MOHAWK's were parked when I arrived.

The new battalion HQ was under construction when I arrived and there were tents for the officers in that area though those are not show here.

The areas were always being changed, with more permanent buildings being constructed every week.

The orientation has been drawn this way, with North in an unorthodox direction, in order to fit on the page more easily.

Runway 31 is compass heading 310, which is approximately Northwest.



PRINT\_01



A print taken with the Kodak Instamatic camera that I had in April 1966. This is the line of EM tents on the opposite side of the company street from the officer's tents that is shown in SC02-03. It is looking in the same direction along the street as SC02-03, with the battalion mess hall in the far background. These are the eight tents shown in the diagram on page 32. The one in which I spent my first week is the third one from the right.

PRINT\_02

The sunburned, but mostly white, "newbie". I'm having an evening meal at a table in the tent rather than going to the mess hall for liver and onions. My glasses are on the table near my left arm and I'm wearing an OSU T-shirt and a black Speedo swimsuit.

The photo was taken with my Instamatic camera by one of the other men in the tent. This photo was taken about two months before my 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday.





PRINT\_03



This dilapidated building was the EM Club, constructed of whatever material could be scrounged. It had a bar, centered around a refrigerated Conex, some tables and chairs and a table tennis table.

The EM shower is the structure in the center of the photo and the small hut in the background is the EM latrine.

These were built by the company members between October 1965 and April 1966, when I arrived.

PRINT\_04



The EM shower and shaving table. The shower consisted of several metal drums welded end-to-end with a shower head on each end. The three-sided stalls were made of woven mats that the men bought from shops in town. The shaving table had a line of mirrors, head-high above the table surface. Each man provided his own basin, a thin-walled pan that the shops along the Phu Loi strip sold for about \$2.

The tents in the background are those of the Battalion Headquarters Company across the road.



SC02\_04 (2,MAY66P4)



The EM tents along the company street are in the background. The photo was taken in front of the new tent for the men of ASTA Platoon. The EM Club is just beyond the men playing basketball. The new EM shower is the white-sided structure at the extreme right, built shortly after I arrived.

The tent at the extreme left is the one where I lived for the first 10 days in the company.

"Hooch, Sweet Hooch."

Below is one of three extra tents "erected" for men of ASTA Platoon. The tents covered a 2x4 wooden frame and had a floor of plywood placed on wooden pallets. This was my "home" from the middle of April 1966 until sometime in November, when we moved to 20-man barracks that had concrete floors and tin roofs. The bicycle belonged to SP5 Vic Marlowe, one of the SLAR TOs who lived in our tent. The term given to this type of living quarters was "hooch." The floor of this "establishment" was made of wooden pallets ringed with 2x4 lumber. A frame of 2x4s was nailed together for the walls and the roof rafters, then the canvas tent was placed over the rafters and plywood was nailed to the sides. It looks crude and it was crude, but our accommodations were better here than what the men in the field had. I was informed that, prior to these tent-over-frame structures, B company's personnel used the tents in the manner in which they were originally designed, that is, they pitched the tents on the ground and held them up with poles and rope. That was not the best conditions in which to live when the rain flooded the area and saturated everything sitting on the ground. I was also told that there used to be an artillery unit of either 155mm or 175mm guns to the west of the company. The artillery unit used to fire shells over the company area and the shock wave emitted from the gun when the shell left the barrel would hit the tents and lift the ridge bar off the ridge poles. That usually brought the tent down on its occupants. Attempts to prevent the ridge bar from lifting by tightening the anchor ropes would, in some cases, snap the ropes when the shock wave

arrived. Ah, yes, the "troubles" the rear echelon troops had to endure! However, no matter how bad the artillery was in causing us these types of trouble, we were damned glad the artillery was "outbound". "Incoming!" was not a word any of us wanted to hear, though we did at times. A closer view of the opposite end of this hooch can be seen in the photo of SC07-12.



SC02-05 (3,MAY66P4)



This is a photo that I took with my camera on a tripod and the camera on a timed trip for the shutter. It was taken outside the opposite end of the tent in the photo of SC02-05 and prior to photo SC07-12. I wanted to show off the first "good" unit patch that I had been issued: that of the First Infantry Division. The illegal uniform I am wearing (standard fatigue jacket and jungle fatigue trousers) was worn by a lot of the men in the company until an order

was issued that mixing of standard and jungle fatigues would no longer be tolerated. We had to wear all standard fatigues or all jungle fatigues. The all-leather, black boots were standard issue in the States at the time, but were later replaced with canvas-sided boots. The baseball-style hat was another State-side-issued item, on which I later sewed a cloth patch of crew member wings. Most of the time I wore this hat, but there were times when I wore a jungle fatigue hat that I purchased in a shop on the Phu Loi "Strip". Note that none of the items on the jacket are subdued, that they are all in the colors that were issued to troops while they were in the U. S.: white name tag (on the front of the jacket), the yellow-colored rank (PFC "mosquito wings" on sleeve) and OD and red division patch. On the jungle fatigue jacket, these items were all subdued, i.e., everything was black on OD.

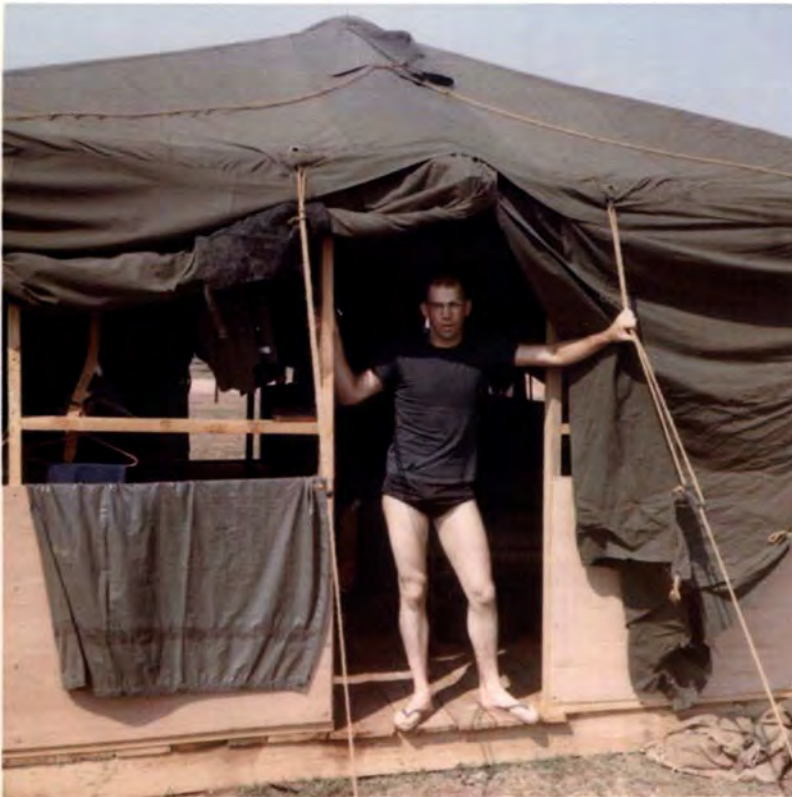
At the time that I joined the First Infantry Division, I knew little of its history. That was unfortunate. After leaving the Army, I did not begin reading about the division's legacy until 5 or 10 years later. I was so ignorant of the Big Red One's past that when I read books about World War II, I was surprised to find that the First Infantry Division was the unit that had made the initial assault on OMAHA BEACH in Normandy, France the morning of 6 June 1944. I had heard and read about that battle more than any other from that war, yet I had failed to recall the units involved. Now, I pay very close attention to ALL units about which I read.



SC02-06 (24,JUN66P5)



PRINT\_05



The "newbie" in a new tent. This was taken before the sandbags shown in photo SC02\_05 were placed near the entrance.

Some of the materials used in the creation of these tents can be seen here. The floor is wood planks nailed over wooden pallets that are laid directly on the ground. The walls and roof are 2x4s.

PRINT\_06

Originally, my bunk was just inside the front entrance. It looks crude and it was, but it was better than being in the field, outside the compound.



PRINT\_07



This is John Bussey, an IR TO with ASTA Platoon. John and I first met at Fort Huachuca in southern Arizona when we attended school for the IR and SLAR equipment.

SC02-07 (21,JUN66P5)



Another self-portrait with the camera on a tripod. This was taken after the standard afternoon rain shower that occurred sometime between 1200 and 1600 hours. The dirt is not mud. It's laterite (see photo SC01-06). This photo was taken just in front of the tent that I shared with five other men.



SC02-08 (6,MAY66P4)



The company's EM club that was built by the men of B Company when they first arrived at Phu Loi in late 1965. It looks decrepit and it was. The gray-colored, metal box is called a Conex and was used to store items other than beer and soft drinks that were sold in the club. This club was later replaced by a brick and stucco EM club built in another part of the company area. The beer and soft drinks were kept in a walk-in freezer on the opposite side of the club.

SC02\_04A



Another view of the EM club is this enlargement from slide SC02-04, though it's a bit fuzzy due to the magnification.



SC02\_09 (38,JUN66Z4)



Photo taken from near the old EM club Conex, showing the second shower used by the enlisted men of B Company. The first shower consisted was about 10 meters to the left in this photo. The tanks on the roof of this shower had to be filled each day by manually turning on a pump to pull water from a well located a few meters away. Each morning, enlisted men stood at the table along the near side of the hut and used the mirrors on the side of the hut and the table to shave and clean up. The small hut with the metal sides that is located beyond the right side of the shower is one of the urinals. The pipe stuck in the ground next to the urinal is the original urinal and then became the "standby" urinal, for those who could not wait while the "protected" urinal was being used. The tent in the background is one of those for the enlisted men of ASTA Platoon. The Conex to the left is the one at the end of the EM Club in slide SC02-08.

This shower had a bit more privacy, unlike the original one where the three-sided stalls left an open side that faced the EM Club. Each time someone used the original showers, the Vietnamese women who were hired to clean the tents would gather in the EM Club to point and giggle.



## PHU LOI AIRFIELD

SC02-10 (18,JUN66Z4)



The vans were part of ASTA Platoon's MOHAWK section at the time that I arrived and the tower was Phu Loi airfield's new control tower that was under construction when this photo was taken. The active tower was in a small van at the edge of the MOHAWK section. The antennas for the active tower can be seen above the large

van at the right in the photo, the one with the white star on the end doors. The tent near the base of the new tower was where the troops who manned the tower had their bunks.

SC02-11 (25,FEB67P6)

The same view, taken eight months later. Another tent has been added at the base of the tower and the tower has been painted. The laterite's color is very vivid in this photo, probably due to the time of day. The smoke in the background is from a fire on the opposite side of the runway, possibly from the daily "burn off" of a latrine.





SC02-12 (7,JUN66Z4)



The photo at left was taken from the top of the new Phu Loi tower some time in the summer of 1966. The photo shows the entrance to the First Infantry Division's MOHAWK section. The entrance is the open area between the two Conex boxes. The boxes are just to the right of the two vans with expanded sides that are placed back-to-back. The two vans belonged to ASTA Platoon and were used for storing and prepping the radar and infra-red sensor equipment (far van) and for the platoon's MOHAWK

flight operations (near van). The OD-colored box on the back of the 2-1/2 ton truck with the star on the hood was the photo lab where the negative film from the belly camera of the MOHAWKs was developed and enlarged into positive photos and where the SLAR and IR films were processed. Items used by the photo lab were stored in the tan canvas-covered trailer to the right of the photo lab. The darker OD-colored box stored items for maintaining the aircraft. The mat-like surface at the right edge of the photo is the PSP area of the MOHAWK section. The PSP provided a more stable parking area for the MOHAWKs and kept them out of the red-colored laterite dirt. The three aircraft in the background are Army L-20 BIRD DOG aircraft.

SC02-13 (39,FEB67)

This photo was taken eight months later. The canvas-covered trailer had been moved and the photo lab had been placed on the ground. Besides the M-151 jeep in the middle of the photo, the four vehicles assigned to ASTA Platoon are, from left to right, a trailer for a 2-12 ton truck, two 3/4 ton trucks, and a 2-1/2 ton truck. To the right of the 2-1/2 ton truck are several cartons that contained various parts for the HAWKs and a long wooden crate that contained an extra SLAR antenna. The L-20 BIRD DOG area in the background as



been enhanced with barrels to provide protection of the BIRD DOGs during mortar and rocket attacks and an above ground bunker has been added near the HAWK entrance.



SC02-14 (39,FEB67)



This photo was also taken from the top of the new Phu Loi tower some time in February 1967. I had originally written that this and slide SC02-13 were taken in the summer of 1966. The number (39) is the same as the previous slide (SC02-13) because the equipment at the processing lab was not able to number slides higher than 39. This shows the two vans used by a group from the military intelligence (MI) unit that was attached to the First Infantry Division. The MI group's function was

to assess photos and imagery taken by the MOHAWKs. The two vans were parked close enough together to allow them to be "linked" by the doors in each van's expanded side. The linked doors are located under the brown-colored panel that is covering a part of the gap between the two vans. The wooden shack beyond the jeep was used as a work area by the aircraft crew chiefs and maintenance personnel. The three rows of red and white barrels that are located beyond the vans were welded together and filled with dirt to form protective revetments for the MOHAWKs. In the near revetment is HAWK 35, the B-model MOHAWK that replaced HAWK 33 that crashed at Vung Tau on the night of 6 July 1966. The new ASTA Platoon commander at the time, MAJ Cecil Carlile, decided not to give the replacement aircraft the same number. After HAWK 35 arrived at ASTA Platoon I painted the First Infantry Division's patch on the aircraft's center vertical tail and the number "35" on the outside of the two outer vertical tails. An exhaust pipe for one of the MOHAWK turbo-jet engines can be seen on this side of the wooden shack. The exhaust pipe is the silver pipe with the slanted end and black interior that is sitting on end between the jeep and the shack. The slanted rear portion of the exhaust pipes can be seen at the rear of each of HAWK 35's engine nacelles.



Photos numbered SC02-15, -16, -17, -19 and -20 are a "panorama" of the Army base at Phu Loi taken from the top of the new, unfinished control tower during June 1966, about two months after I arrived at Phu Loi.

SC02-15 (1,JUN66Z4)



These five photos are not a complete 360-degree view from the tower, but rather a view of the 1st Aviation Battalion area. The runway numbers at Phu Loi were 13 and 31, meaning their headings were 130 degrees and 310 degrees. The far end of the runway in

this photo was the approach end for Runway 31, coming in from the southeast, so this photo was taken looking almost due east. The aircraft hovering in the center of the photo is a CH-47 CHINOOK.

SC02-16 (3,JUN66Z4)



Left, the second of the "panorama" sequence photos from the new Phu Loi control tower. The aircraft in the foreground are those of A Company of the 1st Aviation Battalion.



SC02-17 (4,JUN66Z4)



The third of the "panorama" sequence from the new Phu Loi control tower. The aircraft in the foreground belonged to the FAC unit located next to the MOHAWK section.

The brown-colored objects in the center of the photo are tents in the battalion area that were there when I first arrived.

SC02-18 (31,AUG67P4)



Approximately the same scene as in SC02-17, taken 14 months later. Note all the new buildings, especially A Company's new hanger at the extreme left that was still under construction at the time this photo was taken.

Notice there are few, if any, tents left.



SC02-19 (2,JUN66Z4)



This is the fourth of the 1966 "panorama" sequence from the new Phu Loi control tower. The U-shaped building near the center of the photo that has the silver-colored metal roof on two of its sections, and that can be seen over the top of the vans in the FAC unit's area, is the 1st Aviation Battalion headquarters (HQ) that appears in photo SC02-02. The left third of that U-shaped building has a brown-colored roof because it was built a month or two prior to the remaining two sections and thus has more laterite dust on its tin roof. The battalion aid station is the Quonset hut to the right of the battalion headquarters. Access to the MOHAWK section was via the wide dirt path that begins at the road in front of the battalion HQ and angles toward the lower right corner.

SC02-20 (6,JUN66Z4)



The fifth of the 1966 "panorama" sequence from the new Phu Loi control tower. This photo was taken looking northwest, parallel with runway 31. The area is next to the MOHAWK section.

The path in photo SC02-19 continues in the center of this photo and crosses the ditch at the right. This ditch is the one at the left of photo SC02-12.

SC02-21 (30,AUG67P4)



The same scene as in SC02-20, taken 14 months later. The two curve-topped buildings in photo SC02-20 are both painted white in this photo and are located just to the left of the fire station (slanted-roof building) and behind the utility pole in the foreground. The two tanker trucks in the foreground are fuel trucks that were deliberately segregated to limit any damage in the event they are hit by incoming mortars or rockets.

The difference in color between the two photos is due to the different lighting conditions because each photo was taken at a different time of the day. The lower photo was taken late in the afternoon when the sun was lower and the clouds were thicker.